

From: Stroud, Fred
Sent: Wed 8/12/2015 4:22:27 AM
Subject: Gina to visit spill site

The best part of the story is that the three Republic congressmen are such hypocrites since they are the 'ones' who have declined funding EPA and bowed to mining industry lobbyists to allow these waiting disasters to exist!!

The Governor gets it!!

Too bad Gina can't tell it like it is!!

Story updated at 4:40 p.m.

U.S. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy will visit Colorado and New Mexico tomorrow to view the areas affected by last week's Gold King Mine wastewater spill, which pumped 3 million gallons of water laced with arsenic and other heavy metals into the Animas River.

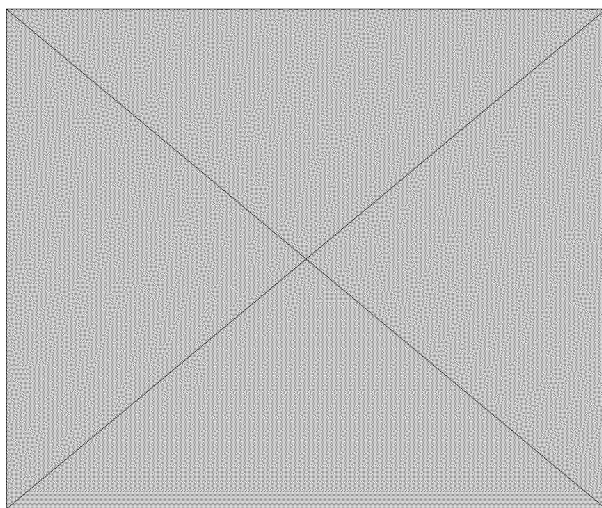
McCarthy's decision comes in the wake of pleas from area lawmakers and Colorado Sen. Cory Gardner's (R) call for oversight hearings into EPA's response to the spill.

Earlier in the day, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) said he hoped the accident could have a "silver lining" if it prompts a more aggressive effort to clean up mining pollution in Western states.

Hickenlooper spoke during a visit to Durango, Colo., and the Animas River, which turned yellow last week when a U.S. EPA team investigating mining contamination at Gold King Mine triggered a massive spill of wastewater contaminated with arsenic and heavy metals.

During his visit, Hickenlooper -- who released up to \$500,000 in emergency funding yesterday to address the spill -- also said the river would reopen for recreation in the coming days, according to the Associated Press.

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The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment said the river's metal content is already at its pre-spill levels, *The Durango Herald* reported.

But three Colorado lawmakers called today for EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to visit the state to address the agency's mistake and subsequent cleanup in a public meeting.

"Local residents, recreationalists, and business owners need to know that EPA will commit to a full cleanup of the accident and work to ensure the full environmental and economic recovery of the affected area," wrote Sens. Cory Gardner (R) and Michael Bennet (D) and Rep. Scott Tipton (R).

The lawmakers added: "Residents remain uncertain as to the dangers posed by this spill, as well as the timeline and recovery plan EPA intends to execute. Gaining an on-the-ground understanding of the situation is important to EPA's response and area residents and officials would appreciate your in-person commitment to an expeditious and thorough cleanup and recovery."

In a subsequent statement, Gardner criticized EPA's response to the spill as "outrageous, reckless and unacceptable."

"That is why I am requesting Congressional oversight hearings to examine the EPA's insufficient response and to ensure that the EPA is held to the same recovery standards as the private sector," he said. "Although the EPA has finally acknowledged the magnitude of the crisis, its ongoing lack of communication and coordination must be rectified. The local communities and industries that rely on the river for their livelihoods deserve transparency, accountability, and an explanation that is far-past due."

At an event in Washington, D.C., today -- McCarthy's first public appearance since EPA released its Clean Power Plan last week -- the administrator found herself fielding questions on the agency's role in the mine remediation disaster rather than on its signature climate change rule ([*see related story*](#)).

In statements and in response to questions from reporters, McCarthy said she's briefing the White House about EPA's role in contaminating the Cement Creek. She also touted what EPA has taken to address it, including setting up response and claim centers in Durango and EPA's D.C. headquarters.

"We've developed and deployed the full breadth of the agency, as well as our partners," she said. "As you all know, we have researchers and scientists at EPA, and they are working around the clock."

McCarthy promised an independent review of the accident's causes and said she expected "concerns and lawsuits." But she stopped short of an outright admission of negligence on the part of the agency.

"I am absolutely deeply sorry that this ever happened, but I want to make sure that we react positively and in a way that's credible and that we move this forward," she added.

McCarthy told reporters following the event hosted by the think tank Resources for the Future that the affected waters would be reopened for recreation when researchers were certain it would not endanger public health.

"We are not going to take risks," she said. McCarthy also said the wastewater plume -- which is expected to reach Lake Mead, the nation's largest reservoir -- does not appear to be permanently contaminating water.

She responded to questions about an early-response delay by saying, "I think we have a solid network in place now to be able to get this job done."

Sent from my iPhone